



News Release

Office of Public Relations
3600 South Constitution Boulevard
West Valley City, Utah 84119-3720
Office: 801-963-3466
Fax: 801-955-3604
Email: aaron.crim@wvc-ut.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Mike Winder, Mayor, 801-633-1300

City Officials Return From Successful Sister City Exchange Ten Goals Mark 10 Year Anniversary of Relationship with Nantou, Taiwan

West Valley City – West Valley City Mayor Mike Winder returned late Wednesday from leading a delegation of civic and business leaders to the Republic of China (Taiwan), where they were hosted by their Sister City, Nantou. In addition to visiting Taiwanese businesses and meeting with government and chamber of commerce leaders there, the West Valley delegation studied first-hand walkable, transit oriented developments similar to what is being proposed for the West Valley City Center; and a new high speed rail network—similar to what the U.S. government is looking at for connecting a number of states, including potentially Utah. They also enlarged their civic ties by meeting with the mayor and city council members from Taichung—a city of 2 million near Nantou—and by meeting with the president and staff of Feng Jia University. The leaders also exchanged information about how they meet infrastructure challenges, how they develop sustainable communities, and how they prepare for and respond to earthquakes (Nantou experienced a 7.6 earthquake in 1999).

The visit marked the 10-year anniversary of the West Valley City partnership with similarly sized Nantou. To commemorate the anniversary and chart a path forward, leaders from both cities crafted ten joint goals during the visit:

- 1) Develop an annual month-long high school student exchange program where West Valley students can go to Taiwan to learn Chinese language and culture, and where Nantou students can go to the U.S. to study English and American culture.
- 2) Encourage and strengthen college student exchanges between central Taiwan's Feng Jia University and colleges in Utah (Feng Jia has already developed some ties with Utah State University).
- 3) Have each community's chamber of commerce put together and share a detailed directory of businesses in their areas that have the potential to export or import goods. (Chamber West President Alan Anderson was part of this recent delegation to Taiwan.)
- 4) Complete a Chinese gate on the campus of the Utah Cultural Celebration Center by 2012 (this has already been funded by a \$10,000 gift from Nantou and funds raised by the local Chinese-American community).

- 5) Prepare for a museum piece exchange for the opening of the gate in 2012 between the UCCC and museums in Taiwan (UCCC Director Ross Olsen was part of the delegation and made contact with museum officials during the visit).
- 6) Incorporate Chinese culture performances and exhibits traveling to America into UCCC programming and vice versa.
- 7) Identify a space in the city's proposed Jordan River International Marketplace where Nantou businesses could sell their goods.
- 8) Help nurture a new Sister City relationship between another city in Utah with one in Taiwan (this year marks the 30th anniversary of official ties between Taiwan and the state of Utah, Salt Lake County and Nantou County are already sisters, as are Salt Lake City and Keelung, Taiwan and Murray and Chiayi, Taiwan).
- 9) West Valley City will host Nantou dignitaries in 2012.
- 10) Nantou has invited West Valley to visit again in 2014.

"We want to continue to work hard to strengthen our ties to West Valley City in education, commerce, culture, and civic areas," said Nantou Mayor Shu-Hua Hsu—a former Miss Taiwan contender and at 35 the youngest mayor in the country. "The leaders from West Valley City are terrific," she added, "and they have become our dear friends."

"The Chinese are becoming increasingly important in our global economy, and our community will continue to benefit as we better understand their language, customs and culture," said Mayor Winder, who was the first mayor fluent in Mandarin Chinese to visit Nantou, Taiwan. "Our city has amazing partners over there," he said, "and we look forward to our continued friendship with them."

"We've made great progress in our sister city relationship, and we look forward to that continuing in the years ahead to benefit even more of our city's residents and businesses," said Councilman Don Christensen, who had served nine years as chair of the Sister City Committee prior to his 2009 election to the city council.

"The chamber formed positive relationships with Nantou city officials and the Nantou Chamber of Commerce leaders," said Chamber West President Alan Anderson. "The chambers collectively set a goal to see where we could match our businesses that may wish to expand their business potential by partnering with each other for goods and services. The goal is to be completed by 2012 when the Nantou delegation returns to West Valley City."

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